

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KABUL 03812 01 OF 02 101404Z  
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SS-15 SP-02 PM-05  
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 EB-08 OMB-01  
TRSE-00 HA-05 IO-13 ICA-11 NSC-05 AID-05 /104 W  
-----060074 101440Z /72L

P 101303Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7941  
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 3812

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, PEPR, PINT, AF, US  
SUBJECT: FIRST MEETING WITH NEW AFGHAN VICE-CHAIRMAN BABRAK KARMAL

REF: A) KABUL 3619 (LIMDIS); B) KABUL 3633

1. ON MAY 10 I CALLED ON BABRAK KARMAL, VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN. BABRAK RECEIVED ME IN A SMALL, SPARSELY-FURNISHED CORNER ROOM OF THE PRIME MINISTRY BUILDING, NEXT DOOR TO THE OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF STATE, TARAQI. HE WAS ALONE; I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DCM AMSTUTZ. I WAS THE FIRST NON-COMMUNIST AMBASSADOR TO CALL ON BABRAK. A PARADE OF COMMUNIST COUNTRY ENVOYS HAD ALREADY PAID THEIR RESPECTS TO HIM.

2. AS HAD BEEN THE CASE IN MY TWO EARLIER CALLS ON CHAIRMAN TARAQI AND FOREIGN MINISTER A N, BABRAK WAS VERY CORDIAL. HE SAID THAT BEFORE HE WAS PLACED UNDER DETENTION BY THE DAOUD REGIME (PRESUMABLY IN CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 KABUL 03812 01 OF 02 101404Z

1973), HE HAD ENJOYED FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL AND HAD ATTENDED OUR NATIONAL DAY RECEPTIONS. HE REFERRED SEVERAL TIMES TO MY PREDECESSOR, AMBASSADOR NEUMANN, WITH WHOM HE HAD ENJOYED MANY GOOD CONVERSATIONS. HE PROFESSED TO HAVE KNOWN ASSORTED OTHER EMBASSY OFFICERS, AND TO HAVE ONCE MET A VISITING COUNTRY DESK OFFICER FROM WASHINGTON. I

TOLD HIM I WAS SORRY WE HAD NOT MET PREVIOUSLY AND SAID THAT MY REGRET IN THIS REGARD ALSO APPLIED TO SEVERAL LEADING FIGURES OF THE PRE-DAOUD GOVERNMENT WHO HAD ALSO BEEN KEPT "AT HOME" THESE LAST YEARS.

3. BABRAK OPENED THE SUBSTANTIVE PART OF OUR DISCUSSION BY SAYING THAT HE HAD MUCH ADMIRATION FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND FOR THE GREAT HISTORICAL CONTRIBUTION OUR REVOLUTION HAD MADE TO THE CAUSE OF DEMOCRACY. HE QUOTED BY MEMORY THE OPENING LINES OF THE AMERICAN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, AND REFERRED TO THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AS THE "FIRST REVOLUTION FOR DEMOCRACY". HE SAID IT WAS A CARDINAL POLICY OF HIS GOVERNMENT TO BE FRIENDS WITH EVERY NATION IN THE WORLD, AND ASKED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S STRONG DESIRE TO HAVE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT BE CONVEYED TO WASHINGTON.

4. HE THEN PROCEEDED TO QUALIFY THIS STATEMENT WITH

AN ASSERTION TO WHICH HE KEPT COMING BACK THROUGHOUT OUR 40-MINUTE CONVERSATION. THIS WAS THAT THE DEGREE OF FRIENDSHIP THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT HAD FOR FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE DEPENDENT UPON THE SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE AND HELP FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS GAVE THE NEW REGIME. THE ONUS WAS ON FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO SET CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KABUL 03812 01 OF 02 101404Z

THE EXAMPLE. IF THE U.S. WAS UNWILLING TO HELP AFGHANISTAN, BABRAK SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE NO OPTION BUT DEPEND WHOLLY ON "THOSE WHO WERE GLAD TO HELP".

5. HE REPEATEDLY STRESSED THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE FOR U.S. ECONOMIC AID AND SAID THAT IN HIS EYES OUR RECENT ANNUAL LEVEL OF ABOUT \$20 MILLION PER ANNUM (HE CITED THIS FIGURE) WAS DISAPPOINTING AND INADEQUATE. "AFGHANISTAN NEEDS MUCH FOREIGN ECONOMIC AID," HE SAID, "WITHOUT STRINGS ATTACHED," AND HE SAID HE FAILED TO UNDERSTAND WHY UNITED STATES HAD NOT GIVEN AFGHANISTAN

MORE IN RECENT YEARS. I EXPLAINED THAT OUR AID POLICY WAS TO HELP THE POOR MAJORITY THROUGH AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS. OUR EFFORTS HAD BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL BECAUSE THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN UNABLE TO IMPLEMENT AND CARRY OUT THESE PROGRAMS. CONSEQUENTLY, OUR AID LEVELS HAD REMAINED MUCH LOWER THAN WE HAD HOPED. I ADDED THAT OUR ASSISTANCE FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS WOULD MOST LIKELY BE THROUGH

THE IBRD AND ADB AND THAT AMERICAN PRIVATE INVESTMENT

WAS THE BEST SOURCE OF AMERICAN ASSISTANCE FOR INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KABUL 3812

8. I THEN REPEATED TO BABRAK WHAT I HAD EARLIER TOLD CHAIRMAN TARAKI REGARDING THE TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS OF OUR POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN. THESE WERE: OUR DESIRE TO HELP MAINTAIN AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE; OUR WISH TO ASSIST AFGHANISTAN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; AND OUR DESIRE FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN THIS REGION. I ALSO STRESSED THE DEEP CONCERN OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, EXPLAINING THAT THIS INTEREST GOES BACK TO THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THAT IT WAS A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY.

7. BABRAK RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT HE, TOO, WAS VERY MUCH FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. ALSO, HE SAID HE WAS WELL AWARE OF OUR PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO HELP AFGHANISTAN ECONOMICALLY AND HE AGREED WITH ME THAT WE HAD NEVER TRIED TO IMPOSE POLITICAL CONDITIONS TO OUR AID. HE HANDLED THE POINT ABOUT REGIONAL STABILITY BY REITERATING PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY THE GOVERNMENT THAT AFGHANISTAN WANTED PEACEFUL RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES AND THAT ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES WOULD BE COLORED BY THE ACTIONS THOSE COUNTRIES TOOK TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN.  
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PAGE 02 KABUL 03812 02 OF 02 101414Z

8. IN CLOSING OUR CONVERSATION, BAXKAK SAID THAT HE WOULD WELCOME FURTHER DIRECT CONTACTS BETWEEN US. IF WE HAD ANY PROBLEMS, WE SHOULD FEEL FREE TO SEE HIM DIRECTLY, AND THAT OUR CONVERSATION COULD BEE

PRIVATE AND UNOFFICIAL IF THIS WOULD HELP. I TOLD HIM THAT I EXPECTED TO LEAVE AFGAHNISTAN IN A MONTH'S TIME, BUT I HOPED WE COULD SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN BEFORE MY DEPARTURE.

9. COMMENT: BABRAK IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM EITHER TARAHI OR AMIN. IN DRESS, HE LOOKS LIKE AN IMPOVERISHED LOWER MIDDLE-CLASS AFGHAN. HE RECEIVED ME TIELESS, IN A SHAPELESS, CHEAP, STAINED, BLACK WOOLEN SUIT AND DARK GREY SHIRT. HE IS ABOUT FIVE FOOT FIVE INCHES, HAS SHORT GREYING HAIR, AND TENDS TO THE ROTUND. HIS MOST PROMINENT PHYSICAL FEATURE IS A HAWK NOSE. AS OTHERS HAVE NOTED IN YEARS PAST, HE DOES NOT COME ACROSS AS A "WELL EDUCATED" MAN, ALTHOUGH HIS ENGLISH IS GOOD. INTELLECTUALLY, HE ALSO DOES NOT IMPRESS ME AS BEING EITHER AS ASTUTE OR SHARP AS TARAHI OR AMIN. BUT HE ALSO APPEARED TO BE MORE OF A GLAD-HANDING POLITICIAN THAN THE OTHER TWO. TO MY SURPRISE, HE LISTENED TO ME MORE ATTENTATIVELY THAN HIS BIO FILE HAD LED ME TO EXPECT. HE DID NOT ENGAGE IN ANY POLEMIC, HE ESCHEWED ANY REFERENCE TO WORDS SUCH AS "SOCIALISM, COMMUNISM, OR MARXISM," AND THROUGHOUT WAS VERY AFFABLE. ELIOT

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## Message Attributes

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**Draft Date:** 10 may 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
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**Review Event:**  
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**TAGS:** PGOV, PEPR, PINT, SHUM, AF, US, (KARMAL, BABRAK), (ELIOT, THEODORE L JR),  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014